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NEW THEATRE MAGAZINE

A New Deal for the Theatre
JOHN ENGLISH

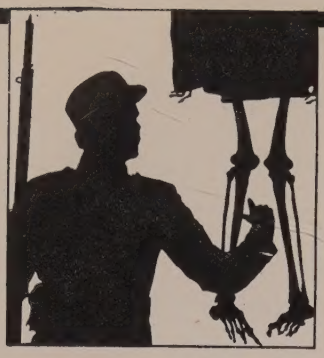
Lincoln's Touring Partnership
HAROLD LANDER

MARTIN BANHAM · STEPHEN JOSEPH
RICHARD SOUTHERN

Interview with Ann Jellicoe

Reviews by John Arden - George Brandt

NUMBER 4 2/- JULY 1960



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NEW THEATRE MAGAZINE

Number 4 July, 1960

The Quarterly Magazine of Repertory and University Drama

Editors:

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Art:

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Finance:

DICKON REED

Circulation:

GAY MACAULAY

Advertising:

BIRGIT ROMMEL

Published by the Green Room Society of the Drama Department, University of Bristol

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Art Section:

Arena Theatre

Shakespeare Festival Theatre, Stratford, Ontario

Library Theatre, Scarborough

Mermaid Theatre, Puddle Dock

Near Miss at Nottingham

THE EDITORS

ON June 13th, after a two-hour debate during which the city council divided on party lines, an attempt to halt the civic theatre project at Nottingham was defeated by a majority of four votes. Demolition work at the chosen site will now continue, but before building begins estimates of costs will have to be approved by the council. Thus the expert and far-sighted scheme for a civic theatre run on community lines, as described in our previous issues, appears to be still in jeopardy. Though Nottingham is now unlikely to be denied a civic theatre, a war of attrition over costs might well result in a Playhouse so whittled-down and eviscerated as to be robbed of all value as a contribution to the progressive development of theatre building. This must be avoided.

The exact genesis of the row over the the new Playhouse is probably by this time a very muddled recollection in the mind of the average citizen of Nottingham. But however the dispute began, it has now clearly crystallised upon two arguments advanced by opponents of the scheme. These claim that the public has demonstrated its opposition to the scheme by its response to recent election promises to halt the project, and that the city is too poor anyway to afford the new Playhouse as planned.

The first argument is best answered by quotation from a letter published in the correspondence columns of *The Nottingham Evening Post* of May 27th :

> The number of people eligible to vote was 218,792. The total number who voted was 79,066—i.e. 36.1 per cent, and they placed their votes as follows :—Conservative, 44,233; Labour, 27,567; Liberal, 6,471; others, 795.
>
> The population of Nottingham based on the most recent figures is approximately 320,000, so that the percentages of the population who voted, and how they did so were : Conservative, 13.8; Labour, 8.6; Liberal, 2.0; others, 0.2.
>
> Just over 31 per cent. of the population have no votes at all, and the greater proportion of these are barred because they are under twenty-one years of age, a very important section of our population in the present context, for they, probably more than any others, are entitled to have a say in the future of our city and in the advantages obtainable from the building and the use of the proposed civic theatre.
>
> As for the 64 per cent. of the voters who withheld their votes, it can, I suggest, be assumed that a substantial proportion would regard the proposal to build the theatre as a matter right outside politics, and the remainder were uncommitted because they have not given deep consideration to the plan.

What of cost ?

It is admitted that the original allocation of £200,000 must now be exceeded. On the other hand, the existence of a "kitty" of £320,000 indicates that construction costs will be unlikely to affect the rates. In the interim before detailed estimates are available both sides can do little more than guess at costs, and inexpert speculation about possible future losses in running the theatre is as invalid as are heady predictions of a lucrative success. As in all such ventures, there is an element of risk and there is room for optimism.

At all events, a substantial building fund exists, and since—in common with the rest of the country — Nottingham and its citizens are riding on the crest of a wave of prosperity, financial objections appear to be insecurely founded.

One can only deplore that this theatre scheme should have become the subject of party strife : there is a special illogicality in the subordination of artistic and cultural

matters to political party platforms. Among the official opposition to the scheme there must be those who wish to see the plans for the new Playhouse implemented, and who are distressed at being thrust into a controversy which threatens them and the pleasant city they govern with the unwanted — and unmerited — label of Philistine. It is to be hoped that in the debate on costs, and elsewhere, these councillors will make plain their intention to remain aloof from any course of action likely to stigmatize the city of Nottingham not merely within this country, but internationally.

For a controversy of this sort cannot be kept doucely contained within the purlieus of the parish pump. The theatre is an international organisation, and a very sensitive one into the bargain. Rap its knuckles in London, and a whimper is heard in Sydney; trample its toes in Nottingham, and a cry of pain rings out in Los Angeles. All this would be of small consequence for those intent on assault and battery upon the Muse, were it not for the kindly and munificent interest the New World has so tangibly expressed in the culture of the Old through the agency of the great private award-making bodies, of which the Rockefeller Foundation is perhaps the best known. Such organisations have, of course, their home equivalents; but when city councils come to debate the shortfall in their artistic assets, they should not flatter themselves that these bodies, either at home or abroad, practice a blind philanthropy. Their natural inclination must surely be to reinforce success rather than to salvage failure, and it is unlikely that when they consider allocation of their extensive funds they should regard with a benevolent eye those communities whose governors have opted out of the modest cultural establishment essential to civic decency in this modern age.

Forward — to 1890

STEPHEN JOSEPH

I HAVE not followed the controversy arising out of *The Capital Without a Theatre*, and it is a long time since I visited Cardiff. I do know a little about the theatre in Leicester and I hold strong views about new theatres. This magazine is no place to make a statement of my views, but I think some isolated comments might be interesting to readers, in particular those young people who may be beguiled by the happy tone of the editorial *Cardiff Revisited*, and H. L. Milliard's article *Leicester's Civic Theatre*, into thinking they have heard the clear voice of reason and experience.

The editors refer to a scheme in Leicester for a "cheap" theatre. The inverted commas are interesting. A cheap theatre is, apparently, opposed to a large, dear one. Small and large begin to creep into the argument. I do not believe that, size apart, any corporation — certainly not that in Leicester—will deliberately choose a dear theatre when a cheap one could be built. In Councillor Milliard's article, reference is made to the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. This is, apparently a dear theatre. But the dressing room space is skimped, the workshop space is inadequate, the paint-frame is too small, the grid is six feet too low. It is cheap. And nasty—for those who have to work in it and know how much better it could have been had a little more money been spent. I shall examine Mr. Milliard's realistic finances in a moment. But first, I must make it quite clear that the editors have confused size with expense. The scheme put forward by the Leicester Theatre committee was completely realistic; if it was "cheap" this was because there was no prospect, at that time, of there being much money to spend. The Leicester Corporation was jerked into action by the Theatre Committee who made much use of my own theatre company, myself a willing participator, for this purpose. Expense apart, the scheme for a flexible theatre, submitted by the Leicester Theatre Committee to the town clerk, was an extremely exciting one that would have put Leicester in the forefront of Europe's dramatic centres. The rejection of this scheme, and the decision to build a conventional theatre will send Leicester forward—to 1890.

There is a good deal to be said for building a playhouse to seat 500 or less people. Firstly, there is every indication in Leicester and other cities all over the country, that not many people want to see plays. If a bigger audience is to be collected each night the theatre is likely to be faced with a policy of playing safe, putting on well tried favourites, West-end successes, or conventional light entertainment. Now, if there is a large audience for a theatre with this policy, there are plenty of commercial managements who will supply it. I note that the Opera House in Leicester recently re-opened with just such a policy. But there is surely some justification for suggesting that this line of business has nothing to do with a civic theatre. Indeed, the Opera House seems to have been re-opened merely to increase the value of the property, which has now been sold for demolition, prior to the erection of a block of shops.

If a public authority is to venture into the theatre one might expect a sense of responsibility towards those who really love the theatre and relish it at its best, rather than competition with commercial managements who cater for what a large

"Leicester's Civic Theatre," by H. L. MILLIARD, appeared in our April issue.

and discriminating public seems to want. However, there is more to be said for a large theatre than that it is capable of supplying second rate plays; as the name indicates an Opera House, for instance, is of the size and shape for opera and ballet. In Germany, where there is a great tradition of opera, and the public and state alike support it, a large theatre, with a proscenium arch is ideal. In any city where a permanent opera and ballet company is to be maintained for performing the great nineteenth century classics, a traditional proscenium arch theatre is necessary. But Councillor Milliard gives no hint that this is what his scheme caters for; indeed, his budget rules out the possibility. Besides, there was an Opera House—why build another ? The fact is that an opera house is usually too big for staging plays. An audience wants to be close to the actors at the performance of a play; the closer the better. Most plays written since Chekov are ruined by the large theatres that dominate our country; Leicester proposes to build an opera house and will succeed in ruining plays.

So much for the matter of size. What of shape and form ? Very few people in this country are aware of the many different forms of playhouse that have been used for staging the great plays written during the long history of the drama. The conventional proscenium theatre, virtually a monopolistic form in this country, was not used by Shakespeare or the famous, unsurpassed Greeks. The proscenium theatre derives from experiments in perspective, made by painters in the Italian Renaissance. It has only had a positive influence on one form of drama—the spectacular melodrama of the Victorian era. If you wish to stage Victorian melodrama, you need a proscenium stage, and in just the same way you do not need a proscenium stage to present Shakespeare's plays. Further, there is some indication, manifest in experiments in America and perceptible here in the work of the Pembroke Theatre and my own Studio Theatre Company, that modern drama belongs in theatre-in-the-round. Leicester proposes to build a theatre ideal for staging Victorian melodrama, which no audience has shown much sign of wanting, and will prove destructive to the great classics and contemporary drama alike.

The editors of *New Theatre Magazine* suggest that "it is not too late for Cardiff City Council to be persuaded to act as shrewdly as has Leicester." I hope I have indicated that there are two sides to this question.

There are several extraordinary remarks in H. L. Milliard's article. The idea that when Leicester's new civic theatre is built it "will join the New Theatre, Nottingham, and the Belgrade, Coventry, in forming an area of culture and drama which will be found nowhere in Europe" is an excellent one—and if the scheme put forward by Leicester's Theatre Committee for a flexible theatre had been implemented it might have been brought to life. To build an out-of-date theatre may help to make the area unique, but it will do no great service to the drama. To build a really modern theatre on a generous budget would simply make Leicester comparable with a dozen European and American cities, but the gain to the drama might justify the loss of civic pride. Further, the idea that in Leicester "there is the determination that the Theatre in our City will no longer be left to the mercy of fashion" is again excellent; but the decision to build a conventional proscenium theatre rather than a flexible theatre or some form of open stage seems to me precisely a capitulation into the arms of fashion—for the conventional theatre is still, let us be fair, fashionable.

H. L. Milliard suggests that an orthodox theatre with 1,000 seats might cost £285,000. I suggest it would be better to build an unorthodox theatre seating 500 people for £100,000. He suggests an annual expenditure of £74,800; I put forward the figure of £26,000. He reckons on meeting this with £5,000 from the Arts Council and the same from the Leicester Corporation—and I'll accept the same sums for three years and then run the theatre at a bouncing profit which will eventually build another unorthodox theatre, of a different form from the first, seating another 500 people; and before long there will be a dozen theatres in Leicestershire all as different from each other as possible. So much for orthodoxy and realistic estimates.

Finally, in an extraordinary paragraph, Milliard states that the theatre committee of the corporation "considered very carefully the views put forward by the Theatre Society in support of an open-stage flexible theatre. They were unanimously of the opinion that the public of Leicester would not respond to this type of entertainment." I suggest that the sub-committee of the corporation knows less about the theatre and its audiences than the Theatre Committee that put forward the flexible theatre scheme. Further, if decisions about the form of theatre to be built in towns and cities are to be in the hands of sub-committees of the corporation, then members of such sub-committees should learn about the modern theatre by examining new theatres in the United States and in Europe. I may be wrong, but I suspect that most members of the committee of this corporation know very little about the modern theatre. Their opinion is, I suggest, of very little value, though it has the power to spend huge sums of money in the name of the drama, which will debase the drama. I do not know what is meant by "this type of entertainment" in the context here used. Does H. L. Milliard imagine that a play on the open stage is a different type of entertainment from the same play on an orthodox stage? In so far as there is a difference, the advantage seems to be on the side of the open stage.

Obviously we must all rejoice that civic authorities are beginning to realise their responsibility towards the theatre; new buildings are badly needed. But the habit of building new theatres has been dropped for so long in this country that to build an orthodox theatre is to build an antiquated theatre. If the moment money is mentioned we rush to the orthodox we shall be doing the theatre more harm than good. In this country, at the moment, one flexible theatre is being built. It is being built at Ealing for the Questors, an amateur company, by voluntary labour, on a tiny budget. The professional theatre has nothing to be proud of in this, except that immense numbers of professional actors and directors and writers have endorsed the Questors' boldness and have praised the plans, given money towards the scheme and are envious that the amateurs will have a modern theatre while they still have to work in museum pieces. Leicester had the chance to take a lead. It has jumped proudly to the back of the queue.

Leicester has decided. I hope Cardiff and other theatreless cities will make more suitable and adventurous decisions. If the drama is to survive in this country, we must break away from the rigid orthodoxy of the proscenium stage. Where new theatres are to be built there is an urgent need for flexible theatres, for theatres of all sorts of unorthodox forms. They must be small, not "cheap." There is no need to pull down a perfectly good theatre. But if we build new ones, to build on the pattern of 1890 is a trifle ridiculous.

Lincoln's Touring Partnership

HAROLD LANDER

In partnership with Loughborough, Scunthorpe and Rotherham, Lincoln Theatre Company is pioneering a touring system of great potential value. It has run smoothly for two years already and a number of exciting developments are now almost within our grasp.

Its objects are to make regular productions available to towns which might otherwise be without professional repertory and, above all, to provide all the partner communities with a much higher standard of production than they could achieve on their own. At present we have a minimum of two weeks' rehearsal, with four weeks' rehearsal on some plays and three weeks on others; given sufficient funds there is no reason why every play shouldn't have four weeks' rehearsal and eventually six weeks or more.

Obviously our way is not the only method of obtaining adequate rehearsal time. Other experiments may well prove even more successful but the important thing is that we are making the attempt. Whatever happens the British Theatre must not kid itself that two weeks' rehearsal is sufficient. There must be a determined effort by all of us to get away from the treadmill of fortnightly rep! Theatres which are still weekly may find that statement amusing in a bitter sort of way, but I personally am depressed by the thought that theatres in some of our largest cities gained fortnightly status many years ago yet have been unable to progress any further. A partnership similar to our own might solve the problem for at least some of them, and make fortnightly rehearsals available to many weekly companies; and I put the suggestion forward with all humility in the hope that even if our own system does not prove universally practicable, at least the consideration of it may lead to some other plan being adopted.

To show how our partnership has evolved we need to go back to the early post-war years. From a home base at Coventry, an Arts Council-sponsored organisation, The Midland Theatre Company, toured to Nuneaton and Loughborough, playing one week at Coventry and a further week at each of the other towns. This experiment, over a period of years, proved that productions every third week are an acceptable compromise for areas that at the present time would find difficulty in supporting professional drama every week of the year.

Meanwhile, some Lincoln citizens, headed by the Mayor, had taken over a dying music hall with the object of founding a good quality repertory company. For the first two years the pattern was the normal one of weekly repertory and then came the opportunity to expand.

With the opening of the new Belgrade Theatre Company at Coventry, the Midland Theatre Company was disbanded. Theatre-lovers in Loughborough refused to take this as the end and asked Lincoln Theatre Company to provide them with a production every third week, travelling to and from Lincoln each day by private coach. To do so, while putting a fresh production on the stage every Monday at Lincoln, presented formidable problems; but the challenge was accepted and our life began to be geared to the three-weekly rhythm which we now know so well.

For the first six months the arrangement

HAROLD LANDER is Manager of the Theatre Royal, Lincoln.

was lopsided, uneconomic and in many ways unsatisfactory. One production in three at Lincoln had two weeks' rehearsal but the production that went to Loughborough had only had one week's rehearsal. Loughborough patrons had been accustomed to three-weekly standards, and Lincoln patrons, accustomed to seeing the same faces week after week, resented the small cast plays, containing only one or two of their favourite artists, augmented by unknown "special weekers," which filled the gap while the bulk of the company was at Loughborough.

Luckily, the enterprising borough council at Scunthorpe had been building a fine new Civic Theatre, and they asked whether we could provide them with productions. We suggested a play every third week as at Loughborough and the experiment began to take shape.

It now became possible to split the company into twin production units. At first K. V. Moore, our Director of Productions, rehearsed one half of the company in the mornings and the other half in the afternoons. The touring production played at all three theatres and so we now had one company which rehearsed for three weeks, and another which had two weeks' rehearsal for one play and one week for the next. Our designer, Sally Hulke, had an assistant but she was still turning out a set a week with no scene dock, no reasonable stock of scenery and no cash to spend.

This was the critical phase of our development. We were running into teething problems galore, practically killing ourselves with overwork and not getting the full benefit from the extra rehearsal time because the actors were unable to adapt themselves to varying rehearsal periods. After two weeks on a production they were not geared up to tackle the next one in a week and we had some very narrow escapes on first nights.

All this time, K. V. Moore and I had the idea that there must be a better permutation if only we could find it, and we wasted many hours and dozens of sheets of scrap paper trying to evolve a more balanced system. The answer came quite suddenly one day. It was simple, obvious and it seemed absurd that we had not thought of it sooner. Instead of taking one play in three on tour we began to take two out of three on tour, with different plays going to Loughborough and Scunthorpe. Consequently we now had twin fortnightly companies alternating at Lincoln. Out of each three productions, one played a week at Lincoln followed by a week at Loughborough, the next played a week at Lincoln followed by a week at Scunthorpe, and the third played a week at Lincoln and then that company did not play anywhere the following week.

From the rehearsal point of view it worked admirably and our standards began to go up dramatically. Every play received two weeks' rehearsal and by that time we had two designers of equal status and Gerald Blake as an Associate Producer. In fact we had two of everything except the Manager!

Our chief remaining problem was a financial one. We received a fixed guarantee from Loughborough and Scunthorpe and these sums had to take into account the salary of the artists who were rehearsing but not playing one week in every three. Consequently we were operating on a shoestring not only at home but also on our tours. We made a profit on some tours and a loss on others and we planned our programme with the aim of breaking even in a kind of nightmare game of swings and roundabouts. During one period, for example, we averaged £2 on the right side over thirty odd playing weeks away from

home—a margin that was much too fine to be pleasant, as it left no room for error or the inevitable accident or unexpected cost.

For quite a time we were too busy to extend the partnership to a further town even if one had been available. By trial and error we had to find out just what could be achieved and Christmas, 1958, brought the first big test. Could we put on a play at Loughborough and Scunthorpe, opening it away from home, while staging a full-scale pantomime at Lincoln ?

We did it by the skin of our teeth and the next question was whether there was any limit to the size of production that we could tour. *Great Expectations* to Loughborough and *Macbeth* to Scunthorpe showed that, provided the sets could be packed into one furniture van, nothing was impossible and so for Christmas, 1959, we did two pantomimes simultaneously, one at home and one on tour.

Following those pantos we discovered how to get three weeks' rehearsal by opening plays simultaneously at Lincoln and Scunthorpe, and we gained a further three week rehearsal period by yet another new permutation, a three week run which opened at Scunthrope, came into Lincoln and then went to Loughborough.

By this time we were ready to expand, and by perfect timing Rotherham Corporation had just completed a very exciting new Civic Theatre. They had heard about our visits to Scunthorpe and at the time of writing they have asked us to visit Rotherham for a trial period of four months, although we hope that they will become a permanent member of our partnership, thus strengthening it enormously.

The advantages of the scheme are obvious. We have two high-quality companies each rehearsing every play for at least two weeks. By alternating a large-cast play with a small-cast one we are able to present a higher proportion of productions that would otherwise be uneconomic. This year our programme has already included *The Teahouse of the August Moon, The School for Scandal, The Matchmaker, Death of a Salesman, The Love of Four Colonels, One More River, The Importance of Being Earnest* and *The Beaux Stratagem.* The "little" plays have included *Five Finger Exercise, Arms and the Man, The Glass Menagerie* and *A Doll's House.*

In the process our actors have performed in four excellent but completely different theatres; a charming Edwardian theatre here in Lincoln, a millionaire's private luxury theatre three miles from the nearest town at Stanford Hall, Loughborough, a brand-new Civic Theatre on conventional lines at Scunthorpe and a Civic Theatre at Rotherham, brilliantly converted from an old church and providing a breathtaking contrast between the unchanged exterior and the dramatically modern auditorium.

The audiences, too, are drawn from completely different environments — a beautiful cathedral city, two bustling steel communities and the sophisticated Loughborough audiences attracted from several large towns and from a total area of more than 1,500 square miles. I believe that the experience of playing in different theatres, and before widely differing audiences, is of the utmost value to the actors. In my view nothing is worse than the traditionally cosy and uncritical repertory audience—it is sheer artistic death.

So much for the good points, what about the snags ? Well, to begin with, what we gain by not confronting audiences with the same old faces week after week we lose, to a certain extent, because there do seem to be a lot of new people coming and going. In actual fact we have several artists who have been with us well over a year but when you

double the normal turnover of any company these days, these regulars do tend to be outnumbered by the new-comers, plus the occasional "special weekers."

The other big snag is that we have to find 45 plays a year, and planning a programme will become increasingly difficult until more plays of quality are being written. We also have to take different plays to each of our partners and it is a little disappointing when we have a particularly attractive production not to be able to share it more widely.

This bring us to possible future developments and to what seems to me to be the obvious next step. By means of an intensive sales drive at Lincoln in the next year or so we must make it possible to run every play for two weeks instead of one at our home theatre. Straight away we should get four weeks' rehearsal on every production, take each play to two of our partners and halve the number of plays to be found each year. Furthermore we could spend double the amount on the settings, dressings, costumes, wigs, etc., for each play. Alternatively, we could spend half as much again, thus raising the standard while at the same time saving money.

Once we had reached this point we should be well placed for my own private day-dream, the extension of the partnership to three further towns within a 50-mile radius. A third company would be required, preferably based on one of the other theatres, and all three companies would then rehearse and play for six weeks.

I have no experience of rehearsals over so long a period and so I may be wrong; but my personal opinion is that, while four weeks' rehearsal is the absolute minimum, six weeks would be slightly more than adequate for most plays. Consequently I envisage the formation of a high-quality ensemble that would devote part of each day to the things that actors should do but which normally they have to neglect once they have left drama school.

In this dream company there would be regular classes in mime, movement, speech, singing, dancing, fencing, etc. We should need a director of studies, and tutors for the various subjects, and so I can see financial hurdles; but it ought to be possible, and if we want it badly enough we should be able to bring it about. I would also like to see actors devoting some time to the appreciation of other Arts. At present we can rarely find time to spend half-an-hour or so discussing our own work, aims and methods. Valuable though these discussions are we need to go far beyond that little luxury and spend time listening to music, talking about painting or sculpture or books. The whole aim would be to develop each actor's personality and to encourage him to perfect his art in every possible way.

In such an organisation it might be possible to accept about a dozen fee-paying students who would undergo an intensive full-time grounding in the basic techniques —say 6-12 weeks—before learning the rest of their job within the framework of a dedicated company. The daily classes for the whole group would be their opportunity to develop skills not only by practice but by observation and emulation. At the end of two years would they be less well-fitted for a professional career than those who have undergone the present system of training ? I don't know the answer but it might be an experiment well worth trying.

So much for the pipedreams; what about the application of our system to other areas ? I believe that there must be many towns of about 60-70,000 population which could be persuaded to build a theatre, similar to those of Scunthorpe or Rotherham for a cost of about £20-30,000. These theatres would have the joint object of

providing a decent home for local amateur productions and a playhouse for a visiting professional company from within a 50-mile radius.

There seems to me no reason why there shouldn't be 100 theatres of this type within the next 10 years. If some national body would produce basic plans, adaptable to suit local taste, then councils could be presented with a cut-and-dried scheme. They would know exactly what it would cost and could budget accordingly.

I can think of many existing weekly and fortnightly repertory theatres which have suitable partner towns within their effective touring range, and if they did make the effort to form a partnership I am sure they would benefit greatly. What is more we should all benefit, because what we need is not fewer theatres but considerably more. With the vast interchange of population which takes place nowadays we are bound to lose patrons from time to time. If their replacements come from towns in which there are no opportunities to see regular first-class drama then it may take us two to three years to lure them into our own theatre. In addition, the more theatres there are the more royalties there will be for authors and the greater the incentive for front rank writers to create for the theatre.

Once several networks similar to our own have been established it might be possible to do a six-week interchange between the networks, say once a year. It would mean uprooting digs but the change would be good for the actors and if the productions exchanged were really outstanding then it should also be exciting for the audiences. Of course by that time a fair proportion of our output should be new plays specially written for our companies—possibly by our own resident playwrights.

Perhaps I should stop there, before I get carried away to the point where I state that our aim should not be to achieve the standard of our present two or three leading British theatres but to surpass the standard of the Moscow Arts or Berliner Ensemble.

To sum up : our system works, it is vastly exciting and it is making professional productions of a high standard available to towns with a combined population of 250,000. If it goes no further, then the merciless grind of the formative years in which we were grossly understaffed for the job we were doing will still have been worthwhile. Extended, expanded and copied it could play a vital part in the development of the British Theatre in the next decade and perhaps even influence the pattern of the next half-century.

(The views expressed by Harold Lander are his personal opinions based upon his experience as Manager of Lincoln Theatre Company and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the company. This applies particularly to the section on probable developments which would obviously be the subject of policy decisions made in the light of conditions prevailing at the time.)

A New Deal for the Theatre—I

JOHN ENGLISH

In a series of two illustrated articles John English, Director of the Arena Theatre Company, will review modern British theatre structure and practice. In this article he relates the theatre's social and artistic functions to those of other contemporary media, and explains why a change in playhouse form has become essential.

In Great Britain we are officially waking up to the plight of the Arts in our twentieth century civilisation. It took the first forty years of the century to begin the awakening and has taken another twenty years to prop open one eyelid. We must be grateful, however, that the awakening has begun at all, and we, in the theatre of the spoken word, must be doubly grateful that we have at last been classified along with our more exclusive and expensive cousins—opera, ballet, music and the visual arts. This is all splendid, and it is good to feel that the youngsters, who take over the reins from our exhausted and bankrupt hands, may never again have it quite so bad.

The twentieth century will certainly be a memorable one in the history of the drama. Already it has brought the greatest upsurge of dramatic practice the world has ever known. This great increase in the volume of dramatic experience has been the concern of the cinema, the radio and of television.

What has been happening in our little corner — the live theatre? Crisis has followed crisis, one by one theatres have gone into a decline, struggled, rallied, tottered briefly at declining levels of achievement, finally to close for ever. By the time the end comes, we have all become weary and ashamed; weary of exhortations to our sense of duty, ashamed of recriminations and accusations about official and community indifference to cultural matters; by the time the end comes, the theatre has ceased to be a pleasure in any sense, it has become a boring burden we are secretly glad to be rid of. With a sigh of relief and an almost clear conscience, we turn to the satisfaction of the art cinema and the Third Programme. On the whole, it is a sorry but poetic truth that the theatres that have gone deserved to go, and that we are now left with the few theatres we deserve.

But that is the past; we have probably reached rock bottom. What of the present and the future? Something is to be done; what is left is to be more adequately supported, and our horizons are widening; it is accepted that it is not only the play that matters, but the playhouse as well, not only the brief time when the curtain is up, but the whole social occasion. Old theatre buildings are to be given a face lift and we are to improve social amenities. We are going to get new theatres; in general they will be Civic theatres and so well founded. We already have one shining and exciting example—Coventry's Belgrade—others are on the drawing board or in the Council Chamber.

This is a new deal indeed, and we must all be grateful but—

Are we all set to play the new hand when it is dealt—do we know even what game we are supposed to be playing? Have we sized up the other chaps across the table, who are also beginning to sort out their cards? Are we sure we still have any right to be sitting in on the game?—

But the metaphor grows tiresome. Do we really understand the live theatre's place in mid-twentieth century dramatic practice—do we really know how we want to practice our art in the radically changed circumstances of today? Have we any reason to suppose that we hold a key to new

inspiration, without which our fine new theatres will go into a decline as surely as did the old ones ?

Let us get ourselves in perspective to begin with; let us be clear about our statistical—numerical—standing in relation to the other means of practising drama—radio, film, television. We—live actors and audiences—are now, and will be for ever I suspect, a small minority. This means not only that we are unlikely to be economically self-supporting, it means also that we need no longer think so much of trying to meet a low average taste in the hope that the mass of people will fall over themselves to make us a commercial success. They won't do it anyway now, so we can give up worrying about it. We can only be kept alive today with public money, given because it is believed we have some special value and status; to justify this belief, we must be concerned first and foremost with doing the best in the best possible way and, if we cannot do this well enough, we must stop doing it at all.

We must recognise too that our minority position is an advantageous one in terms of opportunity. The interests and sympathies of our minority are above the average in things that should matter to us—such things as taste, intelligence, concern for the Arts and humanities. Do not imagine I am thinking of our minority as a social or intellectual snobdom; thanks to two generations of compulsory education and two world wars, it includes people of all social levels and all intellectual levels.

We must of course do everything in our power to expand our minority and to guard against inbreeding, but our greatest mistake would be to seek to attract people from the majority outside, by pretending we are what we are not, or by offering goods we think are at their level, but not at ours.

I suppose we persist in our laborious, expensive and exacting method of practising the dramatic art—live audience and live actors brought together specially for the occasion—because we believe there is some special quality and some special virtue and satisfaction to be gained from doing it in this way. But what are these special qualities, virtues and satisfactions and, even if we have an inkling of what they are in theory, is our practice such as to make the best and the most of them ?

For instance, are we aware that the majority ways of practising drama—in radio, film and television—have irrevocably affected the techniques, practices and expectations of actor and audience ? Do we think we can go on practising live theatre as though the other forms had never arisen ? Can we raise new inspiration in a live theatre that continues to practice in playhouses designed to serve conventions and techniques in which we no longer believe and—when we can remember—try not to practice ?

This brings us to my own special bee in my own particular bonnet. Twelve years of concentrated work have made me more convinced than ever that a radical reconsideration of playhouse form will open more inspirational doors than anything else within our power. I am convinced that the future of the live theatre must be based on a new assessment of the purpose of the live theatrical occasion, and of the desirable physical relationship between the participants. I know that, once this re-assessment is undertaken, there results a changed and more truthful attitude on the part of the actor to the audience, and audience to actor, and of both to the occasion for which they bring themselves together. Once we begin to face up to the realities of the present, once we acknowledge what we are trying to do, what we want to achieve, a radical change in form from the archetypal

nineteenth century picture-frame theatre follows as inevitably as day follows night.

To say that reconsideration of playhouse form is our most crying need, is not to deny the value of other current experiments and advances of significance; for instance the searches for new style in presentation and content by Theatre Workshop and the Royal Court. But to my mind it is tragic that, through accidents of circumstance, the work of both these groups has so far been carried out in nineteenth century playhouses. Because of this, I believe their thrusts forward have been seriously blunted. The work of both these groups would be greatly strengthened if it were based on a fresh total conception of theatre. As it is, we are surprised and delighted that the old dog has so much life in it—but it is still the same old dog.

Before we attempt any re-assessment of what we want for the live theatre, we should try to face up to the fact that the other media have not only altered our status, they have already considerably influenced our practice. Their potential influence is even greater and more significant. There is no time or space at present to do more than draw attention to some of the most obvious points.

The other media have the ability to develop beyond our means the possibilities of realism and naturalism. This has helped us to throw off the distractions of these ideas more quickly than we might otherwise have done. Not that we are free of confusions yet, but it is becoming easier to grasp that our work is art, not life.

The cinema, with its superior ability to exploit both large scale spectacle and small scale detail in visual things, has directed us to the use of more meaningful, less realistic, more evocative, visual elements.

Radio has taught us to use our ears more subtly. In speech we have learnt to follow by ear, verbal patterns and subtleties; for a long time we had obtained this pleasure more usually from the printed page. In sounds we have come to accept a whole new world of evocative, aural signals. Then there is perhaps the most significant influence of all—the technical device of visual and aural close up. It is not really a device of magnification, but a means of bringing actor and audience into intimate proximity. This has made possible whole new ranges of deep, subtle, sensitive interpretation and communication.

Subtleties of human feeling, thought and experience are what most of us are interested in to-day. For the time being we have ceased to be so interested in large scale ideas or generalised emotions rhetorically expressed. We are pre-occupied with re-examining ourselves in detail. I suggest this is inevitable in the first post-freudian generations, and understandable in a world where general principles have become so hopelessly confused. This is the vein of our times and we have to work through it. It will probably take some time.

The subtle techniques introduced by the other media have thrown the live theatre into conflict and confusion. As actors and directors, we recognise the new tools as valuable and desirable; as audience we have come to enjoy and expect their use. In theory the new tools should be given a keener edge by the immediacy and directness of live performance. In practice, in our present playhouses, we find the new techniques betraying us into a mumbling, fumbling, inaudible, incomprehensible muddle. Herein lies our principal dilemma. We feel instinctively we cannot go backward to an earlier rhetorical theatre, yet, in our present theatres, we cannot go forward to exploit the new intimate possibilities revealed.

One of the miracles of the theatre is that

it has continued over the centuries to find new forms suited to its needs; there is every reason to suppose that we shall find a new form again, but let us not ignore the fact that the other media are themselves new forms, and they have already emerged.

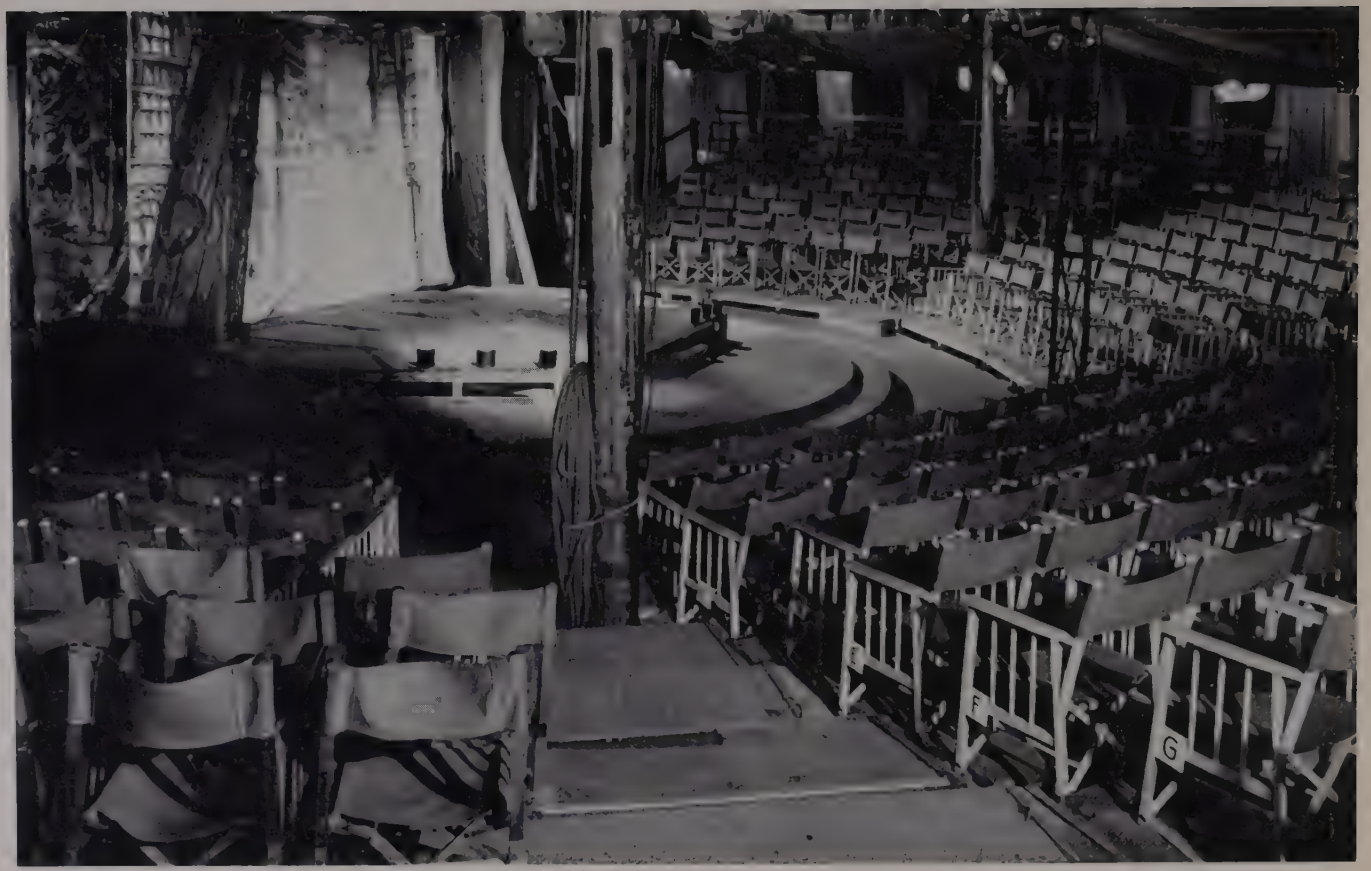
All over the world attempts are being made to face up to these changed conditions. Most of these attempts are directed towards bringing the actor and audience closer together. They are often an effort "to reduce the barrier of the proscenium arch" by jutting out a promontory from the stage house into the auditorium. This promontory or apron is not infrequently found to be unsatisfactory because of the basic late nineteenth century structure of the theatre; the sight lines are wrong, the apron cannot be lit properly; it cannot be set because the tabs and iron cut off access from the main stage. Another approach is to venture the audience out from the circle along the side walls of the auditorium in the direction of the stage; this is an attempt to recapture the atmosphere of a pre-nineteeth century theatre in which tradition says there was a greater rapport between stage and auditorium. Again, as often as not, it does not work because the change is not organic; the sight lines are bad, the audience feeling in the new projections is one of an exposed, uncomfortable vanguard; the device becomes more an architectural decoration than a practical improvement. In our radically changed circumstances, it is extremely unlikely that anything short of a radical re-thinking and re-planning will give us what we need.

What is happening in this way ? I still find it mildly astonishing that in Great Britain only four people should have made any substantial move in this direction—Tyrone Guthrie, Stephen Joseph, Bernard Miles and myself. *(See centre pages).*

In the late forties Guthrie seized on the opportunity, offered by lack of theatres for the Edinburgh Festival, to conduct an experiment in the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland. The Assembly Hall is a rectangular meeting house fitted with a gallery. The hall has inward facing pews or benches. Guthrie decided to build an open stage and to back it on to one of the long sides of the hall. Legend has it that the elders would not allow their seats on the floor of the house to be removed so that, of necessity, the stage platform had to be built over the top of them. This is said to be the explanation of the extremely high platform approached by long and steep flights of steps. It has always seemed to me that this stage is uncomfortably high, and the flights of steps disconcerting and forbidding. Guthrie will probably justify the arrangement as being useful for peripheral grouping of large numbers of subsidiary actors, without seriously masking the central action. At all events Guthrie and Mosievitch have more or less perpetuated the original Edinburgh design in the Festival Theatre at Stratford, Ontario, though it looks as if they have modified it for the new theatre projected for Chichester. The model for this project shows a much lower stage. The major development from Edinburgh has been by way of size. The Ontario Theatre and the new project for Chichester are designed to seat more than two thousand people.

Guthrie's theatre, particularly in its later development, is an epic, rhetorical theatre, and so far as I know, has been used exclusively for that kind of drama. It works extremely well and is undoubtedly a suitable playhouse for a large part of our theatrical heritage, and it is also, I believe, sufficiently liberating and challenging to encourage a fresh exploration of epic writing, direction and acting, an exciting possibility. Yet, whilst this is undoubtedly

Arena Theatre



[*Photo: Lacey's Studios*

John English's Arena Theatre fitted into a circus tent for summer use. The illustration shows the auditorium and the stage as used first in 1949 at Cannon Hill, Birmingham. The theatre seats approximately 500 in ten rows. The stage is 1ft above the outer moat and is 24ft diameter. It is at the true centre of the auditorium. The setting on the circular stage is for rehearsal of a Victorian melodrama, and is quite untypical of the settings normally used.

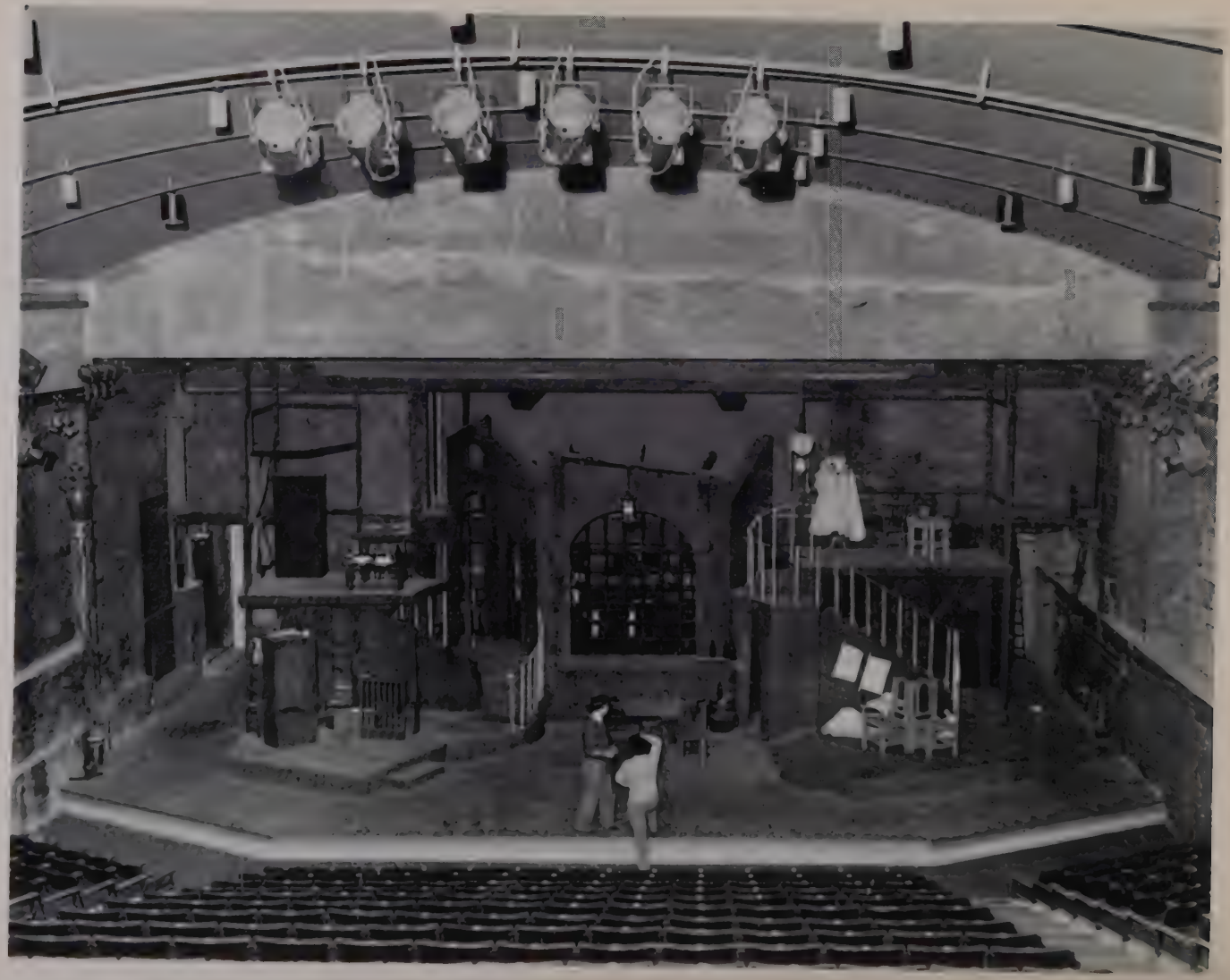
Festival Theatre, Stratford, Ontario

[*Photo : Herb Nott, Toronto*

[*Photo: Walker's Studios*

In theatre-in-the-round there is complete openness about entrances through the audience and the operation of technical equipment, and there is no illusory background to the action.

Mermaid Theatre, Puddle Dock



a theatre for Aeschylus and Aristophanes, for Marlowe and Shakespeare, for Brecht and possibly the Christopher Fry of *The Firstborn, Lady's not for Burning* phase, I doubt if it is the playhouse for Molière or Congreve, Shaw or O'Neill, and I am sure it is not the theatre for Chekov or Ibsen, Tennessee Williams, Beckett, John Osborne, or N. F. Simpson.

(It should be noted in passing that, not only is the scale of this theatre aesthetically and technically unsuitable for a large part of our drama, its size would be an embarrassment in another way. Our provincial theatre centres are working to a target of three or four weeks' run of a play to allow reasonable time for preparation. It will be many many years before any provincial centre will support a three or four week run in a theatre seating two thousand).

While Guthrie was planning the Edinburgh open stage, the Intimate Theatre Group, led by myself, were conducting their survey and completing their first experimental theatre. The first performance in the Arena Theatre took place in Birmingham in August 1948, those on the open stage in Edinburgh in the same month. Intimate Theatre Group's survey and the report of those first 1948 experiments make interesting reading after twelve years. The report is now out of print, but copies exist on the files in various places. Most of the conclusions drawn then seem to me to be still valid, though, alas, many of the possibilities indicated for development still remain unexplored. Let us take a brief look at these documents.

It is worth while, to begin with, to quote some of the articles of the original terms of reference, for it still seems to me the right way to approach the problems. The task was :—

(a)—to survey the position of the living theatre of our own day, in relation to the kindred arts of dramatic presentation—film, radio, television.

(b)—to attempt an appreciation of those essential qualities of the living theatre that cannot be shared by its kindred forms.

(c)—to consider what is required from the living theatre of our own time by its audience, actors, technicians and playwrights.

(d)—to consider how far the present physical form of the theatre enables us to give those things that are required of it.

(e)—if a change in form of the playhouse seems desirable, to produce a tentative plan for a new form.

(f)—to convert this tentative plan into a practical full scale experimental theatre.

(g)—to undertake the production of widely differing kinds of play in the experimental theatre, as a means of examining theories and problems involved.

Here is a paraphrase of some of the conclusions drawn as a result of the survey; they did not command much general acceptance twelve years ago; to-day many of them seem to have become commonplaces. It was concluded that :—

(a)—the historical period of recession of the actor away from the audience has come to an end.

(b)—actors and audience are prepared for an increase in contact between each other.

(c)—technical aids to presentation, that developed with the retreat behind the proscenium arch, are of real theatrical value and cannot be lightly discarded —e.g. differential lighting of stage and auditorium, changeable setting, the actor / audience separating curtain, revolving stages and other machinery.

(d)—many of us are prepared to accept the loss of illusion in presentation, which the use of a more intimate form implies, and indeed would welcome the return to a more truly theatrical atmosphere.

(e)—resurrections of earlier forms of theatre are unlikely to give us playhouses suitable for all the drama the audience of the day wants to see.

(f)—Intimate Theatre Group made a particular study of one form of contemporary open stage—theatre in the round. It was concluded that such a form, whilst having a most salutary effect, might well involve the exclusion of too large a part of the theatre's literature; and that the lack of some background, belonging exclusively to the actors and the imagined world of drama, was a serious aesthetic loss and could not ultimately be tolerated.

Having broken down received experience in this way, it was now necessary to build up again. The objective was simple—to produce a playhouse arrangement based on present need, rather than on modified tradition and practice.

At a risk of being tiresome, I feel I must reiterate one point. Our attempt to design a new practical theatrical structure was a great excitement and inspiration in itself, but in spite of all the enthusiasm for the project, I was not so simple as to believe that a change in physical form alone would produce the artistic renaissance the theatre seemed to need. I did believe that a re-arrangement of physical relationships, based on what seemed to us to be current truth and need, could produce a change of attitude in actors, directors, and audience alike, and that a change to a simpler, less confused, more truthful attitude was likely to be a good foundation on which to build a real artistic achievement. Nothing that has happened during twelve years' practice with the Arena Theatre Company has shaken this belief.

In a further article in our October issue, John English will give an account of his work with the Arena Theatre Company, and compare it with other experiments in theatrical form.

Drama in the Commonwealth: Nigeria

MARTIN BANHAM

THERE is no professional theatre in Nigeria, and the only theatre designed and equipped as such in the country belongs to the University College, Ibadan, although there are plans for another some time in the future in the new University of Nigeria at Nsukka. Apart from one touring company of Nigerian entertainers (Hubert Ogunde and his company), specialising in extravagant melodramas spiced with dancing and music and heavily laced with morals, there is no Nigerian theatre company, and even the plays broadcast over the network of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation are cast with amateurs. Many dramatic societies do exist, but these are almost exclusively the concern of the European communities in the government centres such as Lagos, Kaduna, Enugu, and Ibadan, and the plays chosen by them and the standard of production leave much to be desired. And yet this is in a nation that is rich in dramatic tradition and material. A great deal of the ceremonial of the various ethnic groups in the country is expressed

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dramatically; mime is highly developed, and "actors" are found in such groups as the Egungun (a society proclaiming particular religious and philosophic ideas) and other similar groups in festivals celebrated througout the country. Ulli Beier's *A Year of Sacred Festivals in one Yoruba Town* (published by Nigeria Magazine, Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos) contains a full description of this material. Readers of such books as *The Palm Wine Drinkard* and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* by Amos Tutuola will appreciate the enormous dramatic potential of the folk lore of Nigeria, and Nigerian audiences do not have to be educated to an understanding of the purpose of the drama, as they have to be to appreciate the novel, for instance, for within narrow cultural limits players have been a familiar sight throughout their lives.

It can be seen, therefore, that a great opportunity exists for the development of theatre in Nigeria, a country that is eager for cultural emancipation and which, with persuasion, will look sympathetically upon the financial implications of such a task. Here there would appear to be a unique opportunity for the University to give a lead.

Already much has been done at Ibadan. Due to the energies of a small band of people (notably Mr. Geoffrey Axworthy) and the cautious but tolerant support of the College authorities, the theatrical activities of the University have become the most lively and exciting probably in the whole of English speaking West Africa. The small Arts Theatre—which seats about 300—has become the home of a company known as the Arts Theatre Production Group, open to all members of the College and anyone else with help to offer, and dedicated to "making available to the community the experience of good theatre." Since its formation in 1957 the Group has produced plays such as Obey's *Noah,* Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Ring Round the Moon* and *The Government Inspector,* (plans for next session include *Coriolanus* and *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*) and has co-operated with the student society in a double bill production of Sophocles' *Antigone* and Anouilh's *Antigone,* and another of *The Swamp Dwellers* and *The Lion and the Jewel* by Wole Soyinka. The success of this Group, and its willingness to share facilities with the students and to encourage their own theatrical activity in any way possible, has contributed to a rapid revival of the student dramatic society (The University College Dramatic Society) and it is in this that we find the greatest encouragement. Four years ago the students were producing (to understandably apathetic audiences) *The Man from the Ministry* and *Outward Bound.* Today they have just offered an impressive and moving production of Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan* which by many people has been judged the best single production of any group in Ibadan.

But the revival goes further than this. Owing to the extensions and alterations to the Arts Theatre that have been undertaken in the last six months, it has been necessary to look elsewhere for a stage, and on two occasions the students have moved into the dining halls of the Halls of Residence and taken their plays to their audience, using no scenery and the minimum of equipment. On both occasions the programme consisted of a group of three one act plays. The first programme was Chekov's *The Proposal, The Gossips of Ewa* (an adaptation of Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News)* and a version of *The Monkey's Paw* called *The Munchi Charm.* The second group consisted of plays

entirely written by Nigerian members of the College—two of them undergraduates —including *The Trials of Brother Jero* by Wole Soyinka, a playwright of increasing stature and one who is producing work of tremendous vitality and importance. Soyinka, who took his degree at Leeds and has now returned on a Rockefeller grant to research into Yoruba drama, had his first successes in London at the Royal Court Theatre, and has now had three of his plays produced in the University.

In four years the students at Ibadan have developed from a state of well meaning but poorly equipped enthusiasm to one of competence and initiative as actors and writers, willing to make the necessary sacrifices of time and energy, and increasingly aware of the educational status of the theatre and the possibilities of carrying their university experiences into the schools and colleges of the country as they go out to teach in them.

This developing awareness of the theatre is, of course, to a great extent limited to the university for the moment, but it is beginning to show signs of influencing the outside world. An Ibadan town society, symbolically called "The Players of the Dawn" has been formed by Nigerian civil servants and teachers etc., and is now producing its own plays. Their first choices fell rather in the field of the drawing room comedy, but they now intend to produce plays written by their own members—a direct result of the stimulus received from seeing U.C.I. students doing the same thing.

However, although there is great enthusiasm within the university, this is only a begining, and the prospect of a drama department at Ibadan is still a remote one. But the Department of English is increasing its emphasis on the teaching of drama, including practical work, and this may well be the first step towards the creation of a separate department at such a time as it seems desirable. The extent of the success of spare time effort is some measure of the response that might be expected from the work and influence of a full time teaching department.

Nigeria, though presenting a rich prospect for theatrical development in theory, nevertheless also provides a large number of serious practical obstacles. We cannot remain content with increasing enthusiasm and developing talent within the university or merely among amateur groups, however good they may be. The ultimate object must be the creation of professional theatre companies, and the sooner they appear the better. It is, perhaps, up to the university to produce people willing and eager to staff these companies in all capacities. Several young Nigerians are studying at English drama schools, but by no means enough of them, and it is discouraging to find the governments of the regions unwilling to spend money on this particular field of "further education." Their reasons are obvious, for every student who goes to drama school means one less for teaching or the civil service, where they are urgently needed; and it is not recognised that a training in drama can be of much use in the schools. Consequently young men and women of talent who would like to devote their lives to the theatre cannot do so. Their only hope of employment at the moment is with the N.B.C. or the Television and commercial radio companies — the latter being very much in their infancy. Secondly there are the financial difficulties involved in building theatres. Even one theatre in each of the regional capitals would strain a national purse already committed to widespread schemes of road building, dam construction, and industrial expansion. It is wishful thinking to assume that a theatre is going to take priority over

such schemes at this stage of Nigeria's development.

As far as the private individual is concerned the sheer expense of the enterprise will dissuade him from promoting a professional theatre.

The immediate practical answer may well be to attempt to persuade the government to finance one central company, and to equip it with the means of travelling, by road, throughout the Federation. A "dramatic circus" of this nature would have the advantages of reaching more people than would static companies in the widely scattered regional capitals; and it would be an exciting adventure in itself. But it is well to realise the formidable task that the sheer transportation of this organisation would be. Nigeria is a vast country; many of its roads are still untarred and in the wet season unpassable, though the few main routes are all-season roads. The company would have to be completely self-contained, even down to accommodation, stage and generator. But at least the living theatre would become a reality in every corner of this country and the educational and social benefits of such an enterprise are obvious.

These may be pipe-dreams, but with the encouraging start that has been made at U.C.I. we must be prepared to have faith in the more possible of our dreams.

A University Theatre

RICHARD SOUTHERN

The Nuffield Foundation has made a grant to the University of Southampton of £130,000 for the building and equipment of a University Theatre. Dr. Richard Southern, theatre consultant to the architect, Mr. Basil Spence, R.A., P.R.I.B.A., has written a description of the technical features of the theatre.

The Stage

THE stage is a double stage, designed to serve two functions :

(a) the presentation of demonstrations, lectures and orthodox theatre-shows, in scenic style, of the "picture-frame" type, behind a fixed proscenium frame;

(b) the presentation of experimental shows and lectures in "non-scenic" style, of the open-stage type, on a variable fore-stage projecting into the auditorium.

So far as concerns *(a),* the particular scenic style catered for is intentionally restricted, since unrestricted scenic resources today demand exceptionally elaborate and expensive machinery, and also involve high fire risk. The frame of limitation chosen here is that worked out in practice by such famous "little" or "art" theatres (as they were called some thirty years ago) as the Festival, Cambridge, the Everyman, Hampstead and the Westminster.

For example, there is deliberately limited flying height, but full provision for the use of groundrows and advanced cyclorama lighting in place of printed backcloths. This is an economical system of setting since the stage almost masks itself and permits items of "graphic" scenery to

be reduced to essentials (such as a single set piece), instead of involving a complete set of specially painted wings, cloth and border for every scene—all needing to be changed for the next scene. Thus, though the flying system is simple, the packing space in the wings is, on the contrary, wider and more commodious than in many West-end theatres. The lines will be in general hand-worked lines for light material such as borders, while the few heavy items of flown material, such as lighting battens, will be worked by self-sustaining geared winches.

The cyclorama is of a somewhat unusual design; it is rigidly built with a flat centre section and flat oblique sides, each joined to the back with a short curved section. There is some considerable difficulty offered to easy scene shifting by deeply-extending cyclorama sides; yet, on the other hand, such deep sides are a great help to masking —especially to "upper-side-masking"—and can in practice effect a great saving in scenery. Thus here, the *upper* part of the sides has been retained, but the lower part has been cut away to allow of free passage through for scenery. Since, however, these sides are flat, not curved, it is perfectly simple to fill up the open passages with a specially prepared scenic piece, should the need for a wide cyclorama arise.

With the help of a small fixed inner proscenium, this stage will mask with only two wings a side, and one main border.

The stage possesses two tranverse traps, each extending across the whole width of the acting-area, and capable of being opened at any point in their length.

There is a complete safety curtain system with release vents above.

So far as concerns *(b),* the chief feature is the provision of a very considerable fore-stage in two sections on lifts, in all large enough to provide an adequate acting-area in itself, and all planned to come in front of the proscenium wall and within the orbit of the auditorium. Thus provision is made for full experiments in what I have termed "open-stage" technique (as against the "closed," or enclosed, orthodox stage of the picture-frame tradition), a technique to be distinguished from theatre-in-the-round and offering, in particular respects greater theatrical facilities—e.g. a larger audience, reduced back-speaking, more effective and direct entrances, a background for the players, facilities for "upper-stage" work and a somewhat easier task in the changing of furniture.

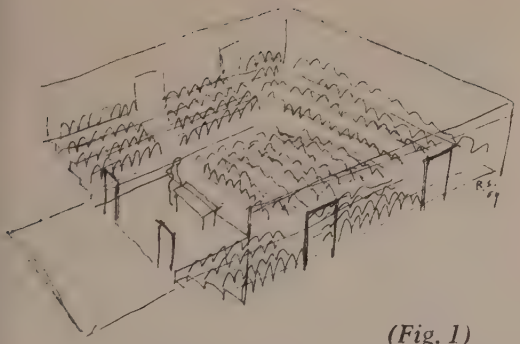
This advanced stage is divided transversely into two sections, both raised and lowered on screws. Either or both sections can be raised to stage level; either or both lowered to stalls-floor level (to take seating); or either or both lowered further, to below floor level, to accommodate a small or large orchestra.

The Auditorium

The auditorium has been planned (as is essential in any theatre) after the stage was designed, and in this case specifically to suit its dual function. This has involved peculiar technical difficulties in that the auditorium-demands of a "picture-frame" stage and an "open" stage are vastly different, especially as regards sight-lines. A further very important influence on the design of the auditorium is that it had to provide a fully adequate lecture theatre.

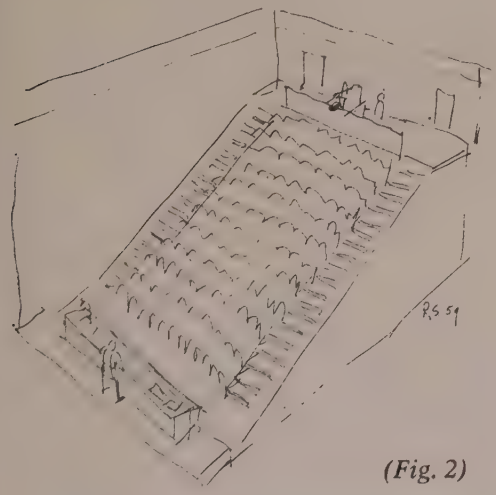
The solution was found by a bold combining of two distinct kinds of auditorium, and in this respect the scheme can claim to be unique. The two kinds of auditorium might seem at first sight to be mutually exclusive. They are as follows :—

1. A wide, low, flattish, single-tier auditorium, planned to embrace a lecture platform on three sides—open stage style. *(Fig. 1)*



(Fig. 1)

2. A high, narrow, sharply-raked auditorium, rising at the back to an upper tier and planned to face a lecture-demonstration-bench, as in an operating theatre, offering special facilities for good viewing—picture frame style. *(Fig. 2)*



(Fig. 2)

In brief, the auditorium consists of a centre portion of sharply-raked, rising seating, ascending from floor level to above the gallery level at the back. In addition to this centre portion are two curved and stepped side portions at floor level, particularly designed to accommodate side spectators at open-stage performances or lectures. The third element of the auditorium consists of a pair of raised wings of similar side seating, curving round, gallery-fashion, from a point some half-way up the central rising block. *(Fig. 3)*

The two types of theatre involved, and the formula for combining them, are shown in preliminary sketches made at the beginning of work.

This scheme disposes an audience of some 412 persons in good positions for viewing an open-stage performance or lecture, while by leaving a number of side seats vacant (possibly to be distinguished by a different coloured upholstery), and utilizing instead the space left by the lowered fore-stage for extra seats, a good accommodation for 440 persons can be offered for picture-frame productions, lectures with lantern pictures, or cinema performances.

Backstage

Accommodation is provided for dressing rooms and green room for a moderate cast; or alternatively, for dressing rooms only for a large cast, with an adjacent lecture room being temporarily taken over as a green room for the occasion.

An equipped carpenter's shop is provided adjacent to a scenery store, and a moving paintframe (with gas and water laid on) directly behind the cyclorama wall. Access to the cloth on the paintframe is by means of raising and sinking the frame, and *also* by means of wheeled "donkies" or trollies, which are so designed as to allow of being wheeled on to the stage to form the basic structure of an open-stage background, when needed.

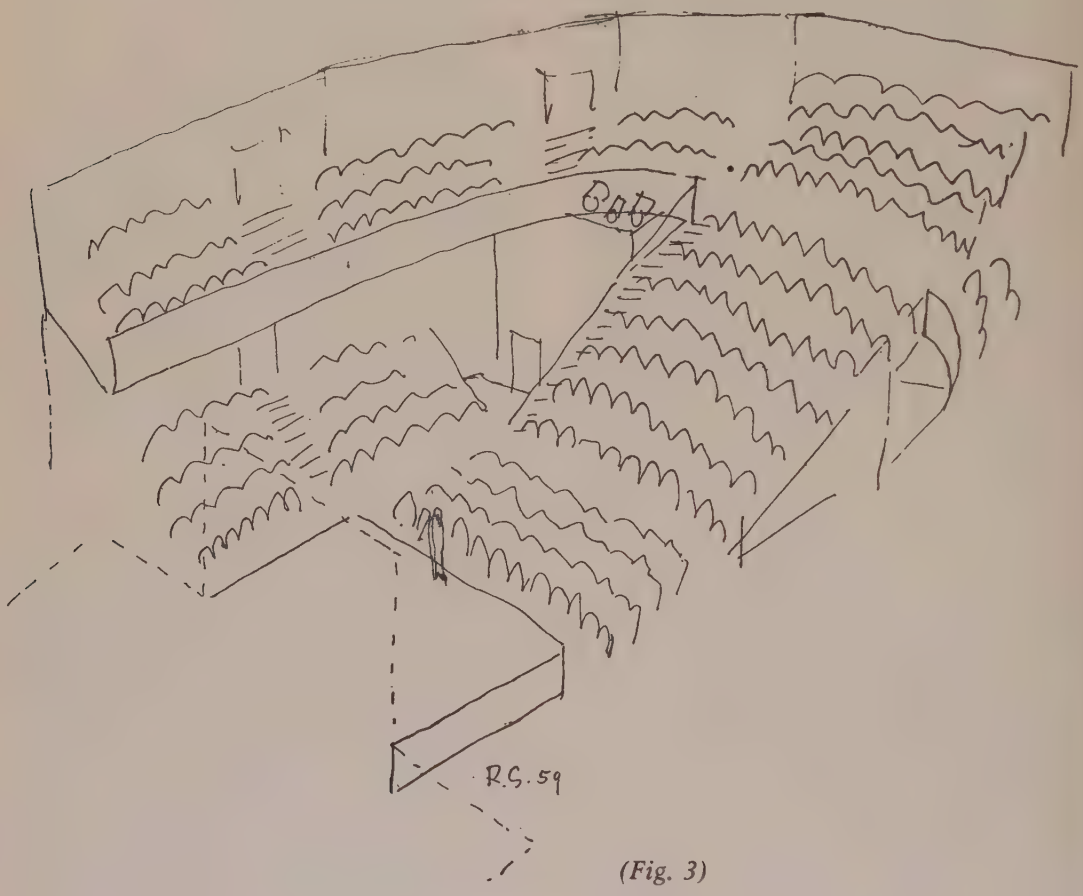
Lighting

Lighting will consist of a No. 1 mixed spot and flood bar behind the proscenium opening, a No. 2 bar of acting area floods and spots, and a No. 3 or "sky" batten of floods to light the cyclorama.

Front-of-house lighting is from two positions (near and distant) in the ceiling, and from cross-lighting positions in the side walls.

Removeable footlights will be provided.

The light control position will be at the back of the auditorium and a choke dimming system of 54 ways will be installed.



(Fig. 3)

Question and Answer

ANN JELLICOE

Q. THERE seems to be a difference of approach towards writing between "poetic" dramatists such as John Arden, and more realistic writers like Wesker. How would you describe your own work ?

A: I don't regard my writing as poetic. The word "poetic" nowadays is almost a

ANN JELLICOE was interviewed by Jill Pomerance and Michael Anderson.

term of abuse; "poetic" now carries overtones of a sort of falseness, feebleness, a writing for effect. On the other hand to intellectualise the whole time deadens writing. When I write a play, I am trying to communicate with the audience. I do this by every means in my power—I try to get at them through their eyes, by providing visual action; I try to get at them through their ears, for instance by noises and rhythm. These are not loose effects; they are introduced to communicate with the audience directly through their senses, to reinforce the total effect of the play, and they are always geared to character and situation. The theatre is a medium which works upon people's imagination and emotion—not merely their intellect. And I am trying to use every possible effect that the theatre can offer to stir up the audience—to get at them through their emotions—and I don't think of this as poetic. I write this way because—the image that everybody has of the rational, intellectual and intelligent man—I don't believe it's true. I think people are driven by their emotions, and by their fears and insecurities. Popular art today is based on this: all "pop" music is an appeal to the emotions. My play *The Sport of My Mad Mother* was conditioned by this belief. Consequently, I use many rhythms which echo "pop" rhythms—not in the obvious poems, but in the speech; I only regard this as poetic insofar as it is a direct approach to the senses, bypassing the intellect.

Q: People say they cannot find a meaning in plays like *The Sport of My Mad Mother.* Do you think this is their fault or your fault?

A: I think the word "meaning" shows exactly what is wrong with people's attitudes. If they were to ask "What is the play *about*?" it would be a better approach. This is a new kind of play, which demands a new approach. Most playgoers today are not used to taking anything direct in the theatre. What they do, is transform it into words and put it through their brain. For instance, there is a scene in my play where Caldaro is knocked out, and the Teds stand him on his feet, wrap him up in newspaper, cavort round him, chanting, till they get to a pitch of ecstasy when they tear the newspaper off him. Now in this action there are hardly any words that make sense—there's nothing which your intellect can take in. If you sit watching and say "What does this *mean*? What does this *mean*?" you're not going to get anywhere; but if you allow yourself to be excited by the visual action and the gradual crescendo of noise underlining this, you may begin to appreciate what it's *about.*

This is really Arnold Wesker's point about demonstrating. You see, so many plays tell you what is happening the whole time. People don't *act* angry; they *tell* you they're angry. Now, my play is about incoherent people—people who have no power of expression, of analysing their emotions. They don't know why they're afraid; they don't even know that they are afraid. So they have to compensate for their fear by attacking someone else; they're insecure and frustrated, and they have to compensate for that by being big, and violent. And all this is directly shown, instead of being explained; if you're content to watch it without thinking all the time "What is the meaning?" so that you don't even see or hear, you're so busy thinking—then you will get what it's about. In other words, it requires a new attitude on the part of the audience.

Q: Can critics help to build up this new attitude?

A: Yes. Critics actually mould audience opinion so that before ever the audience goes into the theatre they know what they

are going to see—and so this is what they do see. But it is not an easy job to skilfully and honestly mould audience opinion. Critics, like everyone else, react violently against what is new. The critic is always led by the artist—never the other way round. And it always takes the critic some time to condition himself to what is new.

Q: But are there signs of a change on the part of audience and critics ?

A: Oh, yes; the violent reaction which plays like *The Birthday Party* and *The Sport of My Mad Mother* produced when they were first performed is now being absorbed. Nobody believed it would happen so quickly; I thought it would take five or six years before people began to understand what we were trying to say.

Q: Arnold Wesker says " The reason why the New Drama has emerged is a social one." Do you agree—especially about your own writing ?

A: If he means by this that new dramatists have emerged because they have political ideas they wish to communicate, this is in some degree true, I think. There are other reasons—over the past four years the theatre has become important to intellectuals as quite the most vital, potent and stimulating way of getting over what you want to say; another reason has been the work of the English Stage Company in developing new writers. I didn't start writing for social reasons; I started because the *Observer* Competition was announced. This is not to say that I don't feel myself very much in sympathy with people like Arnold Wesker. We share the same values but our approach is different.

Q: Is there any social criticism in your writing?

A: It's indirect. I have certain ideas about what's valuable: I think people should aim to be truthful and should aim to be strong —and what I think influences the way I write. But I don't regard plays as a cheap and easy way of getting over a political message. A play which may have a very fine message, can be a very bad play. The important thing is to write plays which are good theatre, and if your values are right, then your message will be right too.

Q: Arnold Wesker has complained that his plays reach the wrong people; only a minority in this country ever visit the theatre. What do you think about this ?

A: I agree. The purpose of art, in my view, is to make people live more deeply—to make them open their minds and their senses wider. This is why one wants more people to go into the theatre. It's much more difficult to communicate with an untrained mind through painting and through music, than through the theatre, which has so many means of getting at people. This is what makes it a potential " pop " art, which of course is what it once was.

But now it's so difficult to go to the theatre, and everything is so formal once you get there. It's so easy to switch on the television, or to go to the cinema, where you don't have to think what you're going to wear, you can come and go any time you like, and you can really see and hear. I think theatres are the wrong shape; I want Open Stage theatres, where the audience aren't in a long thin wedge behind each other. And at the same time I want a breakdown in the Holiness of the theatre. At least the theatre is better than concert halls —where men still sit on the concert platform wearing white ties and tails. What bigger barrier could there be ?

Q: But many people stress that one of the attractions of a visit to the theatre is that it's a social occasion.

A: What I want to remove is the pseudo-magnificence, the sort of faded imitation of an Edwardian night at the Opera, which

still hangs round so many of our theatres. When people say, "We must have red curtains, we must have gilt, we must have glittering chandeliers," all they are saying is "We must have glamour, we must have excitement." Of course I want glamour and excitement, but I want it in terms of today. I don't want to escape back into 1890.

Q: How is the theatre to cease to cater for a minority ?

A: I don't know what the answer to this problem is. I think myself that there is a definite feeling among working class people (for want of a better phrase) that the theatre is a "snob" art; and I think in a sense they're right. Perhaps a start could be made at a very practical level, by having a place where boys, and girls, or Teds or anybody, could come in and possibly help build scenery, or sell tickets, or make coffee for the bar; and if they got interested they would tend to bring their friends. You'd have to do it through people you knew, in an unpretentious way; let them associate themselves with the work, rather than feel this was a snob establishment, which was going to try and improve them. You wouldn't call it culture; you wouldn't call it anything. What you would do is just try to give them the direct experience of theatre.

Q: Do you think any change on the part of new writers is necessary to bring in a wider audience ?

A: Let me put it this way. So long as writers write for intellectuals—that is, so long as they write plays which require a *trained mind* in interpret them, then they're in for trouble. But if you write a play which goes straight to people's emotions through their eyes and through their ears, surely this is a direct experience which anybody can share in ?

Q: Do you feel that a working-class audience would enjoy a play by one of the socialist realist writers more than a play in the style of *The Sport of My Mad Mother*? Won't they feel that a play by, say, Osborne, or Wesker is about the kind of people they know, which will provide a stronger common link between the play and the audience ?

A: I think the answer is in the way that the play is presented to them. People will go and watch the Crazy Gang, and love it. Now, when you analyse what the Crazy Gang are doing, it could be regarded as fantastically *avant-garde*—people come in through windows, men dress up as women and as babies, they throw packets of tea at the audience. They do the most extraordinary things if you approach them as you approach "culture." Now if our plays could be looked at in the same sort of way, as "pop" art, as something totally accepted, as theatre, that would be the answer, wouldn't it ?

At the moment we're hedged round with a sort of holy aura of "experimental" and "*avant-garde*," and yet we are trying to get back to basic theatre and what we do has been accepted in the Music Halls for years.

Q: May we pass on to the question of production: should playwrights produce their own plays ?

A: I was trained as an actress and a stage manager, and as a director, and I had most definite ideas about my own play; in fact I produced it myself, with the sympathetic guidance of George Devine. First let me say that if you're not a trained director, it's no use thinking of it; directing is a job like any other, you need experience in how to handle people and how to use a stage; so I shall only speak about playwrights who know how to direct. Ideally speaking, a playwright is the very best person to produce his own play; a producer is only an intermediary for a playwright who does not know how to produce. But there are certain

dangers in producing your own work—you may not see the wood for the trees. The action of the play is so clear to you, that you may not clarify it for the audience. Although it is a most satisfying thing to do, you should have someone with you the whole time, who thoroughly understands what you are trying to do, and will see you after every rehearsal and argue out what he does not understand. On the other hand, even when an author is not a trained director, he has every right to go into rehearsal. He has no right to interrupt rehearsals unless he's appealed to, because he may upset something which the director is trying to achieve with the actors—actors are human beings and must be handled very carefully—but he has every right to point out, in conferences, what he thinks is wrong or is not being made clear. The closer a writer and director are the better.

Q: Is this feeling shared—do directors like the author to be present ?

A: Every good director who is sure of his job likes to have the author there; only bad directors who are insecure regard the author as a menace, because they don't trust themselves. A good director will always be prepared to listen to an author, ask his help, or argue with him.

Q: We haven't yet said much about money. What are your views about theatres built and supported by public money in provincial centres ?

A: The more money the better.

Q: But I think the question arises, if the body which is paying the money happens to have different ideas to the artist, as to who should have the last word.

A: The money must be given absolutely without strings. It is no use a committee thinking that they should have the right to control an artist because they pay him. The only way they will get anything of value will be by giving him completely free rein. I would deeply resent—as would any artist—being told by a man who runs a fleet of taxis how a play should be produced; and if I was a director of a theatre, I should deeply resent being told by a man who cuts up steak, how I should choose my plays.

Q: But a councillor will object that as a chosen representative of the public, he has a right to supervise the way public money is spent—especially on an amenity for the public, like a civic theatre.

A: The answer to that is that the public doesn't know what it wants until it's had it for some time—not merely till it gets it, but till it has got it, reacted against it, and then accepted it. It's just like fashion; you know how each year the Paris designs come out and everyone says, " How simply terrible ! " —and within a year, they are all wearing it.

The committee's moment—the moment when they have the right and opportunity to influence the way money will be spent—comes when they choose the man who will be head of the theatre, who will be responsible. But having appointed a director, the committee must let him get on with it. So many people, if they don't agree with what the man is doing, will say he is no good. The good and original artist will always provoke violent reaction. In fact, the public actually needs this constant novelty and stimulation. In reacting against new work they are awake and alive, then they gradually accept it and live with it until the next new thing comes along, which in turn provokes reaction. It is necessary and healthy—I wish people would begin to realise this.

Book Reviews :

The Caretaker. By Harold Pinter (Encore, 5s.)

THERE was a great deal of self-conscious bewilderment among the critics after the first production of *The Birthday Party* and it is not yet entirely dispersed — 'What,' they said, 'Does Pinter symbolise ? Why are his characters so dreary ? And why why why, can't he tell a story properly, with all the points underlined so that nobody has to listen with more than one ear ? ' But the 'stories' of Harold Pinter's plays are surely perfectly clear. It is not whether we listen with one ear or two, but what we expect to hear, that is important. Hitherto, plays we can call Realist have tended to follow the Ibsen model : in other words, a series of events was developed, connected by a strictly logical progression of fact, and we could be sure that anything done or said on the stage had its place in the *concrete* structure of the plot. If a character is seen to be fiddling with an electric plug in the first act, then later in the play there is going to be a power-cut or an electric shock, or some other necessary incident to provide a twist in the plot. Or, if the play is Symbolic as well as Realist, the point will be made (pretty heavily) that the electric light represents, say, the Bonds of Civilization; in which case, the declaration of war in Act Three will coincide with a blown fuse, and the symbolism will be unmistakable to the most inattentive.

But Mr. Pinter does not work like this. Instead, he gives a perfectly straightforward story that might almost have been overheard in a public bar—a tramp is picked up and offered lodging by a man engaged in decorating a flat. The man turns out to have been in a mental hospital, and the tramp tries to side against him with the younger brother (a go-ahead character, who owns the house) and establish himself firmly as the cuckoo-in-the-nest. But he finds that the brothers both combine against him despite their apparent differences : and the play ends with his expulsion from the premises. The conventional treatment of this sort of story is not difficult to imagine —it might make a Willis Hall or Ted Willis T V piece—and the interesting thing is the closeness with which Mr. Pinter's writing in fact does approach such a treatment. But he leaves his corners never quite joined up. There is a deliberate haze about the past, and indeed the present, of all of his characters, which never quite becomes so opaque that we are entirely bewildered. Their inconsistencies are never quite contradictory. We never quite catch a complete view of them. They are seen in vivid glimpses for moments, and then seem to disappear. Thus, the elder brother's account of his brain-operation is highly detailed and circumstantial. But is it true ? If it is true, why isn't Mr. Pinter writing that serious social play to denounce the cruelty prevalent in mental hospitals ? And if it *isn't* true, why does it take the crucial place in the text—the climax of Act Two ?

Of course, these questions are impertinent. Because they are based on the old idea of Realism—that the dramatist has no room in his plays for the inconsequence of life; except, perhaps, for the odd 'fey' character or the carefully-placed piece of apparent irrelevance. But after all, it is a very long time since Desdemona first said 'Faith, half asleep' when asked how she felt after her husband had called her whore, and we are surely ready for that degree of 'Realist' writing that will show us all the time, not merely what they would have said if the author had thought it up for them,

but what they actually *did* say. Clearly this too is only a convention : and it is a convention that can easily become sterile. But in Mr. Pinter's works it is fresh and exciting —and with the production of his second full-length play it seems that it is at last being understood.

There is more to Pinter than Realism, however. Exactly what, can be best discovered, perhaps, by examining his expert use of "casual" language and broken trains of thought. The number of 'Pauses' marked in the stage-direction is remarkable and paralleled to my knowledge only in Beckett. This orchestration of the play implies an orchestration of observed life on the part of the writer—there is in fact a care in the selection of the 'not quiteness' of it all that is at least as calculated as the construction of the average 'well-made' play. I do not think we should feel bound to look for any allegorical interpretations—they may be there : but there are no clues as to how to find them, and the play stands up perfectly without them. Therefore any such search is surely more of a parlour game than serious literary appreciation. Taken purely at its face value this play is a study of the unexpected strength of family ties against an intruder. That in itself is a subject deep enough to carry many layers of meaning without our having to superimpose any extra scheme of Symbols. It also, by its verbal patterns alone, tells us a great deal that is uncomfortable about the workings of the English mind today. So much of everything we see and hear is 'never quite' anything. Never quite completely dreary, but.....

JOHN ARDEN

The Lunatic View. By David Campton. (The Studio Theatre Limited, 5s.)

Scientists streamline murder by radiation, bacteria, nerve gas; small colonial wars eat up hundreds of thousands of lives; whole populations pour across frontiers, fleeing for their lives; and over our heads hangs the threat of total extinction, fascinating and paralysing. That's our age—and we are tired of hearing about it. Apathy falls over the rugged scene in a gentle snowfall of newsprint.

What can the arts do, drama especially, to articulate the frozen scream, the inaudible groan, of today's madness ?

Flaming calls to action and full-throated protest have gone out. What has been gaining ground in the theatre in recent years is that curiously oblique form of comment; anti-theatre, the drama of the absurd. Various writers have settled in different regions of this new isle, full of the distinguishable noises (acid, grim, suffering or sarcastic) of Adamov, Beckett, Ionesco, Hildesheimer or, to quote more native sounds, Simpson and the comedy-of-menace man Pinter.

The drama of the absurd is a grotesque reflection of a grotesque age. It composes the deadening clichés of life into a funeral waltz. It provokes and strangles laughter, it worries you, makes you mistrust the postman, your children, yourself. It is the sick joke of a sick era. The drama of the absurd rarely mentions war but it is nevertheless dark with the shadow of radioactive dust. Consciously or not, these writers are the seismographers of our rumbling age.

The underground tremors are felt more clearly than usual in a recent addition to this body of drama, David Campton's unhappily named "The Lunatic View" (it's a crazy title, man !). Three out of four of these pocket plays (one act, two or three players each) mirror public issues in a ludicrous perspective. In the First Glimpse ("A Smell of Burning") we see the complacent Joneses, personifications of apathy,

who natter about food while a homicidal maniac blows up the gasworks and prepares to hang Mrs. J. from the window. We know they must be readers of *The Daily* **** The Third Glimpse ("Getting and Spending") compresses Evelyn and Bobby's passage from youthful bliss to frustrated old age into half an hour of playing time, somewhat like Marcel Marceau who acts out of the life of man in a matter of minutes. The Fourth Glimpse ("Then") is the end, literally: it is a post-nuclear encounter of last man and last girl, temporarily saved from extinction by the brown paper bags they wear over their civil defence-minded heads. He used to teach the maths which helped to pulverise the universe; she was a former beauty queen, Miss Europe. She says, "I'd have been Miss World next year—only now there doesn't seem to be a world to be Miss of."

If *The Times* has called David Campton's work derivative, that is true only in the sense that he is not very far out in front of the pioneers pushing into the land of the absurd. Nor has he quite the distinctive tone of voice of, say, Beckett or Pinter. But he writes sharply, wittily—and theatrically. "The Lunatic View" has been performed by Stephen Joseph's Theatre in the Round and by a number of amateur groups, notably the Tower Theatre. The small number of characters and the simple scenic demands make it obviously suitable for circular treatment, without standing in the way of more orthodox production. We can confidently expect to meet it again in the theatre—but perhaps with a handier title?

GEORGE BRANDT

Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style. Michel Saint-Denis. (Heinemann, 110 pages, 15s.)

This book, by an acknowledged master of the art of the theatre, would be a worthwhile acquisition for the two concluding chapters alone. The final chapter is concerned with the question of training for the theatre, and represents a distillation of the experience gained by the author in the three 'non-conforming' schools directed by him since 1935: The London Theatre Studio (1935-1939), the Old Vic Theatre School (1949-1952) and l'Ecole Supérieure d'Art Dramatique in Strasbourg (opened 1954). The penultimate chapter, on directing and designing, resumes pithily, against a world-wide background, the duties of those most directly concerned today in theatrical presentation.

Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style is rich in ideas, and neatly commingles theoretical and practical advice in a style at once varied, witty and exact. And at his most thoroughly practical, the author (as one would expect) never stops short at a merely mechanical view of the theatre. For M. Saint-Denis, it is style that binds together the entire theatrical illusion—text, acting, direction, design and architecture—into a coherent and significant whole. And style is not, in essence, an easy matter.

Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style points no short cut to theatrical success; but it furnishes an invaluable finger-post along the long, always difficult and usually rough road that leads towards the mastery of a complex and engrossing art.

HARRY THOMPSON

Also received: "Method or Madness?" by Robert Lewis, Heinemann, 165 pages, 21s.

Correspondence

Dear Sir,

Although Cyril Wood's article "A Playhouse for Cheltenham" in your April issue is highly gratifying to those of us who laboured to re-establish the live theatre here, it contains, probably because Mr. Wood was not here at the time, a very serious omission which cries aloud for correction—not only in justice to the person concerned.

"The Council lost at least £7,000 and the losses of subsequent managements led to the closing down of the theatre last June," writes Mr. Wood; and that, apart from a passing reference to "the faithful minority who had supported the theatre up to the last moment," is all he has to say before he passes on to Mrs. X —whose magnificent efforts we would be the very last to decry.

Our efforts (including those of Mrs. X) had started even before the closure of the theatre was announced but when it was pretty obvious that it was coming.

Why ? Because the policy of the then artistic director, Mr. John Gordon Ash, was showing what a theatre devoted to the highest ideals but free from wrong-headed deference to tradition could mean, even when it was pursued on a shoe-string budget and under the most strenuous weekly rep. conditions.

The impending closure was announced towards the end of a short season that included Osborne's *The Entertainer*, Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, Miller's *All my Sons* and *View from the Bridge*, Mortimer's double bill *Dock Brief* and *What shall we tell Caroline?*, Hunter's *A Day by the Sea* and Bolt's *Flowering Cherry*.

This season offended some of the "faithful few" but, to our personal knowledge, brought into the theatre many young people who had never before set foot in anything but a cinema.

Had the announcement of forthcoming closure arrived in the middle of a season of vapid British farces and stock comedy-thrillers such as had for two or three years solidly preceded this Indian summer, few people would have done anything but heave a sigh of nostalgic regret at the passing of yet another pleasant old theatre.

There would certainly not have been spontaneous demonstrations by students in the gallery, petitions, manifestos, letters to the press and unsolicited offers of cash.

It is no exaggeration, and should certainly cause no offence to the present management, to say that John Gordon Ash's seasons of plays created the atmosphere in which the creation of the Everyman and its policy was possible. That fact should be acknowledged not only in justice to Mr. Ash and his actors and actresses (several of whom stayed to the bitter end at financial sacrifice to themselves) but because it is surely a pointer to the way in which the theatre in general must go on if it is to survive.

Yours faithfully,

P. O. JONES, DEREK MALCOLM.

Cheltenham. June 7th 1960.

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